

## Poetry.

### THE WAY MARKED OUT FOR US.

O the waters are dark and turbid,  
And fierce danger swells the tide,  
But I'll launch my boat on its surface,  
For I see no way beside.

There are calmer tides for another,  
There are blander winds at sea,  
But oh, why should I shrink or falter  
From the way marked out for me?

For I see the purple waters  
In the murky, heaving tide,  
Some good that I ne'er had gathered  
From any pathway beside.

Some treasures go down in the struggle,  
Some joys that we cannot save,  
For oh, where is the life unwounded  
This side of the peaceful grave?

We are blind at the best and thankless,  
And mercy misunderstood;  
Our blessings we deem our evils,  
Our evils we deem our good.

But his hand has marked out my goings,  
And I know, though wan and tired,  
That my cross, be it hard and heavy,  
Is the one that I required.

So I'll take the tide at his bidding,  
And trust in his guidance free,  
For, with all its brooding dangers,  
'Tis the way marked out for me.

## Contributions.

### WHY NOT BAPTIZE INFANTS.

MARTIN SHIVELY.

In all God's demands upon the children of men, one characteristic is apparent to all,—it is that he is reasonable in every one. Now it so happens sometimes, that man in his relations with his fellowman, insists on conditions with which it is well-nigh impossible to comply. The man whose lord forgave him the debt of ten thousand talents, when he had not wherewith to satisfy the claim, was most unjust toward his fellow servant who owed him a much smaller amount. He demanded payment in full, and at once, and because of his debtor's inability to pay, he cast him into prison. (Matt. 18: 23-35.) This is the story of but one man's unreasonableness toward his fellowman. Legion is their number, and they are of daily occurrence. I thus see more and more reason why God should be praised for his kindness in all his demands upon his sinful creatures. In kindness and in tender mercy has the plan of salvation been offered to man. And though there be those who are ready to declare the plan with the Christian duties it imposes, as impracticable, yet all who carefully consider these duties and the beneficent spirit which prompted their announcement, must at last admit, that "the command-

ments of the Lord are not grievous." (I John 5: 3.)

Neither is there a single impossibility required at the hands of God's children. We can readily conceive of heights which we could not reach, and of works which, unaided, we could not perform. But even though the salvation which we prize so highly, is justly called the "great salvation," (Heb. 2: 3.) Yet it is God's gift; not for conformity with an impossible standard, but for compliance with demands within the easy reach of human achievement. There is no ground for saying "I can't," for the way is clear. And wherein the flesh with its weakness is insufficient for the trial, there appears in glorious majesty, the power of God, which makes all things possible. (Matt. 19: 26.) With such help, there are no heights beyond the possibility of Christian ascent, and no achievement beyond the reach of the Christian hand. We walk amidst the troubles and trials oft, as we travel toward the heavenly city, but on the other side of these conditions is "Beulah land," where implicit faith in our God makes and keeps all things bright,—a condition wherein we no more say "good bye" to loved ones crossing the silent river, but an abiding faith in the resurrection morrow, helps us to say with strong men of yore "good night." To-morrow will find us once more united. To such heights as this can the spirit of our Father lead us, for with his help every barrier of the way may be scaled. I would not have us get the idea that we can *earn* the glories God has promised his children. This is not possible. The Master gives them to us, but they are given on certain conditions, and these conditions can be complied with by everyone.

Another matter no less worthy of note is, that before God every man stands entirely, and personally responsible. We are each asked to render obedience to every command of God, and each one is required to exercise faith toward him. Thus one man cannot be sufficiently obedient to answer for himself and another, nor sufficiently faithful to answer for two. It is indeed true that our lives touch every other life with which we come in contact, and thus the lives are mutually influenced by each other. And it is also true that we shall be responsible to God for the kind of influence we exert over others, but if others will refuse good admonition, and will not follow good example, we who have given both, have discharged our duty. We can do no more than did John when he pointed toward Jesus and said, "Behold the lamb of God." (John 1: 36.) We cannot force men to come into the kingdom, as did some of the over zealous

missionaries of the early church, who were sustained by the Roman government. We can only show to men the advantages and beauties, present and future, which it offers to those who enter, and then leave the choice to their hearts. There is therefore no privileged class before God. "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess." (Rom. 14: 11.) This declaration includes all. There are no hereditary rights or privileges. True, the godly example of the parent may influence the child in favor of Christianity, but it must from first to last during the period of its accountability, render a conscious obedience to the Word and its author. Our mothers and fathers may be God-fearing people, but that is not sufficient to assure us of salvation, so long as we remain in sin, rejecting the grace of God. Every man is individually and personally responsible to God, from whom he will receive blessing for personal obedience, or punishment for his personal disobedience. No man can be held responsible for another except in so far as his influence has led him in righteousness or sin. Even a parent is responsible for his child to no greater extent. The child must choose for itself. We may plead long and earnestly in behalf of the straight road, which leads to present and future reward and happiness, yet he with whom we so plead must of his own free will, and by his own choice enter upon the path which leads to such ends. If these statements which I have made are true and correct, then the question is already settled,—infants are not proper subjects for Christian baptism.

Not only are we sustained in holding to the truths as before stated, but our creed, the Bible, teaches us that faith and repentance *must* precede Christian baptism. There is abundant scripture to support this declaration. Now, if it is not possible for one person to have faith for another, then it is clear that each one must have it for himself. And if it is not possible for one person, to repent in the scriptural sense, for the sins of another, then it is plain that each one must do so for himself; for no doubt, each is sufficiently guilty before God, to make him heartily sorry, without bearing a double load, even if God would permit such an arrangement. There must, therefore, first of all, be a firm and abiding faith in God and his word; there must be an absolute confidence in his ability and willingness to save. Else why should we turn to him? Thus when the Philippian jailor was so greatly concerned about his spiritual welfare as to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16: 30.) the preachers of truth immediately gave answer, "Be-